

**STRATEGY TO RESPOND TO CONGRESSIONAL LANGUAGE  
PERTAINING TO THE  
NOAA OFFICE OF OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH**

---

1. **Purpose:** The 2003 House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Reports have language pertaining to the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (NOAA Research). The 2003 House Appropriations Commerce Justice State (CJS) Subcommittee Report has requested that NOAA develop a laboratory consolidation plan. The report accompanying the House CJS Appropriations Subcommittee mark states: In recognition of current resource limitations the Committee is forced to operate within, the Committee directs NOAA to review the continued requirements for twelve separate laboratories, six of which are located in Boulder, Colorado. The Committee directs NOAA to submit a laboratory consolidation plan to the Committee by March 15, 2004.” The Senate report language states: “NOAA is directed to report to the Committee on Appropriations on the costs and benefits of breaking OAR up into its constituent parts and distributing those parts as desirable to the other line offices. The report should specifically address how the newly configured research sector will directly assist line offices in developing timely solutions to problems confronting NOAA now and in the next 5 years.”
2. **Review Team:** NOAA will appoint a Blue Ribbon Review Team, under the auspices of the Science Advisory Board (SAB), to conduct the review. The confirmed team members are: Dr. Berrien Moore III (UNH), Chair, Dr. Richard D. Rosen (AER, Inc), Dr. Richard W. Spinrad (NOS AA - NOAA), Dr. Warren Washington (NCAR), RADM Richard West (CORE).
3. **Review Team Support:** Background information will be compiled including line office administrative costs, data for each lab on staffing, costs, facilities, and programs. Program data will include information such as: description of programs, requirements for programs and users of program results, performance measures and relationship to similar programs in other laboratories or in NOAA. Relevant material from earlier studies of laboratories, results from the program baseline assessments that will be completed this fall, laboratory reviews, and other existing data will also be assembled. NOAA will also provide information on the costs of integrating the constituent parts of NOAA Research to the appropriate line offices. Mary Anne Whitcomb ([Mary.Anne.Whitcomb@noaa.gov](mailto:Mary.Anne.Whitcomb@noaa.gov), (301) 713\_2454 X173) is the lead NOAA contact person providing support for the Review Team.
4. **Charge to the Review Team:** Using the information provided above, and any additional information garnered by the Review Team, please address the following questions:
  - a. NOAA is a science-based agency with operational responsibilities. Does the research conducted in the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (NOAA Research) provide effective support and vision for NOAA by enabling (i) the improvement of products and services, and (ii) the introduction of new products and services through the transfer of technology and the development and application of scientific understanding?
  - b. Is NOAA Research adequately linked to NOAA's service organizations (i.e., NWS, NESDIS, NMFS, NOS, etc.) and are the research programs relevant to the needs of these organizations? If so, what are the benefits? If not, what changes would you recommend?
  - c. How does the management structure and processes of NOAA Research compare to those of other agencies managing research? Based on that analysis, should NOAA Research be dissolved into its constituent components and distributed across NOAA, should it be left as is, or should NOAA consolidate all of its research activities in a single organization?

- d. Focusing specifically on the NOAA Research labs, would consolidation of the labs yield a more effective scientific program? If so, what would you recommend?
  - e. Would consolidation of labs yield a more efficient structure, by reducing administrative overhead and infrastructure/manpower? If so, what would you recommend?
- 5. **Timing:** The consolidation plan is due to the Appropriations Committee on March 15, 2004. The report is due to the Commerce Department February 2, 2004. The Review Team should provide its draft report, including findings and recommendations, to the SAB by mid-December. A copy of the draft report will also be provided to NOAA for technical review. The SAB will meet early January to consider the draft report and deliver its Final Report to NOAA by mid-January to allow NOAA leadership time to develop its final consolidation plan by February 2.
- 6. **Costs:** NOAA Research will pay for all the costs associated with the development of this plan.